

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE DR CASHENNA A CROSS

COUNCILWOMAN AT LARGE

CITY OF GLENARDEN MARYLAND

IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

SENATE BILL 837

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I appear before you as an elected municipal leader representing residents who depend on affordable and predictable access to health care. In local government, we see firsthand how health related costs affect household stability, senior residents on fixed incomes, and working families who already face rising insurance premiums.

Senate Bill 837 addresses a growing concern related to utilization management barriers placed on prescription drugs that have already been reviewed by the Prescription Drug Affordability Board. When the State has undertaken a formal review process and established determinations or policy recommendations, additional administrative barriers can create delay, instability, and unnecessary cost to patients.

Continuity of care matters. For residents managing chronic conditions, disruption caused by repeated prior authorizations or step therapy protocols can result in lapses in treatment, emergency care utilization, and avoidable deterioration of health outcomes. From a municipal standpoint, these outcomes translate into increased strain on community services and public resources.

The policy direction of SB 837 is sound. However, as an elected official entrusted with fiscal oversight and accountability, I believe implementation must be accompanied by measurable transparency.

For that reason, I respectfully support this legislation with amendments that require annual compliance reporting, fiscal impact analysis on premiums affecting municipalities and small employers, and clear enforcement authority for violations. These measures ensure that the intended patient protections are realized without unintended premium escalation or regulatory ambiguity.

Local governments operate within fixed budgets. Health insurance costs for employees and retirees represent a significant expenditure line. It is essential that reforms designed to improve

access are paired with oversight mechanisms that protect affordability across the system.

With these amendments, Senate Bill 837 will promote continuity of care, reduce administrative burden on providers, and strengthen accountability within the insurance market.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report with amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Dr Cashenna A Cross

Councilwoman At Large

City of Glenarden Maryland